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FILMED RECITATIONS OF FRENCH LITERATURE--EVALUATION OF THE FILM AND CULTURAL COMMENTARY. FINAL REPORT.

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AN EVALUATION AND CULTURAL COMMENTARY ON FILMED RECITATIONS OF FRENCH LITERATURE WERE PRESENTED. THE FILM PRODUCED INCLUDED 15 POEMS REPRESENTING THE 15TH TO THE 20TH CENTURIES, ONE MONOLOG, AND ONE SHORT STORY. THE SELECTIONS WERE ARRANGED BY AGE LEVELS INTO FOUR REELS, TOTALING 41 MINUTES. ASSEMBLING THE IDEAS COLLECTED FOR THE COMMENTARY INVOLVED VERIFYING THE TEXTS AND DATES OF THE SELECTIONS, COMPILING THE BIBLIOGRAPHIES, PREPARING VOCABULARY AIDS AND ILLUSTRATIONS, OBTAINING THE WAIVER OF COPYRIGHTS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF EXPERIMENTATION, AND DRAFTING CHAPTERS FOR THE COMMENTARY. THE CIRCULATION OF THE FILM AND COMMENTARY TO TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, FOR CRITICISMS AND CONSTRUCTIVE IDEAS ON THE MATERIAL, RESULTED IN THE PRESENT EVALUATION. ED 003 894 IS RELATED. (GC)

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Donald F. Riecks
Project Director

Final Report
by
Marie-Georgette Steisel
and
Howard Lee Nostrand

University of Washington
July 1964

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FILMED RECITATIONS OF FRENCH LITERATURE:
EVALUATION OF THE FILM AND CULTURAL COMMENTARY

A Project Conducted Pursuant to Contract No. OE-4-14-010
with the United States Office of Education,
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Final Report

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INTRODUCTION
THE PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE OF THE PROJECT

In recitals of French poems, monologues, and brief short stories, the actor Pierre Viala has succeeded in holding the attention of foreign audiences in Africa, the Americas, and Asia. Many of the school children and adults in these audiences know so little French that they would have great difficulty following a conversation, a play or a broadcast in the language.

It consequently occurred to one that if the actor can hold the interest of such foreign audiences, then a film of selected recitations -- especially if it were attractively presented in color -- might be expected to have something of his power to command attention, with the added advantages that the film could teach in many places simultaneously and that students could hear and see a poem recited repeatedly until they knew it.

Specifically, three questions pressed for answers to be sought at each age level, from the primary grades to college:

I. Can such a film be used to teach the language, with its characteristic rhythms, intonations and facial expressions?

II. Can it arouse an expectation of enjoying poetry, and contribute to a love of literature?

III. Can such a film be used, finally, to give insight into the cultural and social context of a foreign language and literature, provided the teacher is assisted in formulating the aspects of the people's way of life that are exemplified in the recitations?

The purpose of the present project was simply to answer those three sets of questions. The procedure took the form

of a succession of steps.

The first step was to produce a film whose technical and artistic excellence would obviate the unwanted variables of any detrimental influences from these sources. This step was accomplished in the filming of the recitations on July 19, 1963 as authorized by letter of intent dated July 5. The filming was done at the studio of Max H. Rarig, Seattle. It was directed by Mr. Joseph Nelson of Rarig's, Inc., and supervised by Professor Nostrand and Mr. Riecks. The judgments of the technical quality of the film and sound track have been uniformly laudatory. The judgments of the artistic quality have been favorable though there is some disagreement among the evaluators on points of taste, as will be discussed in the body of this report.

The selections were chosen by Mr. Viala and Mr. Nostrand, from among those of Mr. Viala's repertory which have both literary merit -- either as serious art or as humorous writing of the kind to be acted out -- and the capacity to interest American audiences. They comprise fifteen poems, representing all centuries from the fifteenth to the twentieth except the eighteenth; one monologue (Autrefois, by Charles Cros); and one brief short story (Daudet's Le Sous-préfet aux champs).

The second step was to circulate the film to a few specialists in French culture, in kinesics and paralanguage, and in language teaching, in order to collect their ideas. A wide range of advice was thus obtained as to how the film could best be used in teaching, what assistance should be given to experimenting teachers, and what cultural or social characteristics of French life could be pointed out in these selections. It is important that the selections had been chosen not becuase they lent themselves to teaching about French culture, but on the two criteria of their literary

worth and their appeal to American audiences.[1]

The recitations, totaling 41 minutes, proved to be about equally divided, as had been hoped, among those usable in the elementary grades and above, those usable at the junior-high-school age and above, those for senior-high-school and above, and those for college and adult education, which proved usable also in advanced high-school classes. Some copies of the film were divided into four reels, to facilitate repeated viewing of single poems[2] and also to permit wide distribution of the nine copies printed for experimental use. The arrangement of the selections by age levels is as follows:

Reel 1, elementary-school level (and above)

		minutes and seconds
Robert Desnos,	La fourmi	48"
	Le pélican	1'
Raymond Grenier,	Un fruit pendu...	1' 8"
Charles Cros,	Le hareng saur	5' 35"
		8' 31"

1. This step was protracted and the subsequent steps were regrettably delayed by the unavoidable fact that the contract could not be funded until January 30, 1964, nearly seven months after the contract was to have begun according to the project proposal. A second letter of intent meanwhile was issued but did not advance sufficient funds to buy prints of the film. The work prints were consequently circulated to the advisers one by one. On March 4, Mr. Nostrand inquired of the Language Research Section officer in charge of the project whether an extension of time could be granted in view of the delay, but the answer was that this could not be considered. And in fact, an extension beyond the project's termination date of July 14, 1964, would have had to stretch well into the academic year 1964-65 in order to give time for arranging, executing, and evaluating further experimentation.
2. Experimenters were told they could make film loops for single poems, provided they kept cutting and splicing in the blackout spaces.

Reel 2, junior-high-school age (and above):

		minutes and seconds
Charles d'Orléans,	Le temps a laissé son manteau	47"
Paul Verlaine,	Les sanglots longs	
	Il pleure dans mon coeur	3' 3"
	Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit	
Jacques Prévert,	Chanson de la Seine	1' 17"
	Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau	2' 15"
		7' 22"

Reel 3, senior-high-school (and above):

Pierre de Ronsard,	Mignonne, allons voir...	1' 15"
Jean de La Fontaine,	Le singe et le léopard	2' 17"
Arthur Rimbaud,	Roman	2' 10"
Charles Cros,	Autrefois	5' 53"
		11' 35"

Reel 4, college (and adult education):

Charles Baudelaire,	Correspondances	1' 33"
Jacques Prévert,	Promenade de Picasso	3' 15"
Alphonse Daudet,	Le sous-préfet	7' 15"
		12' 3"

The project's third step, to assemble the ideas collected and organize them into a booklet of commentary, actually was begun at the same time as the second step. The four commentators of the final booklet were among the first to see and hear the film, and the work began immediately -- verifying the texts and dates of the selections, compiling the bibliographies, preparing vocabulary helps and illustrations, obtaining the waiver of copyrights for the academic year of experimentation, and drafting chapters for the commentary.

This stage of the project culminated in the 183-page volume titled Film-Recital of French Poems; Cultural Commentary [by] Howard Lee Nostrand, Marie-Georgette Steisel,

Frances E. Creore, Victor E. Hanzeli, and Donald F. Riecks, [with] Illustrations by Lyle Seuffert...University of Washington, 1964. The first 24 pages of the study deal chiefly with methods for teaching the poems and exploring their sociocultural context. Pages 25 through 166 present the commentaries on the individual poems. Pages 167-179 give a brief account of "La Versification française étudiée dans les textes du film-récital." Teachers proved to need this condensed statement of applied theory in order to be able to discuss the expressive form of the poems, essential both for appreciating them as works of art and for understanding how they exemplify features of French culture. The last four pages, 180-183, bring together selected references on French verse, children's dictionaries, French culture and biography, methods of language teaching, and the method of explication de texte.

The fourth step of the project was to lend the film and Commentary to teachers in schools and colleges for experimentation, seeking criticisms and constructive ideas on such aspects of the materials as are indicated suggestively on pages 23-24 of the Commentary. An invitation to experiment and report the result was published in the Modern Language Journal, French Review, and regional newsletters, and was announced at meetings, including two sections of the Modern Language Association meeting at Chicago in December, 1963. The number of teachers who would have liked to experiment greatly exceeded the number of those who could be included, since this step of the project was shortened by the unavoidable prolongation of the second step. (See page 3, note 1.) The experimentation that could be reported was further curtailed at the latter end of the available time, moreover, by the decision of the investigator, at the request of the Language Research Section of the United States Office of Education, to lend the prints of the film with the Commen-

tary to the NDEA Institutes for Teachers of French, beginning early in June. It was believed that this use would accomplish more for the improvement of language teaching than would the collecting of further evidence on the value and limitations of the materials. (The Institute Directors were asked to send reactions of Institute participants of demonstration classes, but no criticisms or suggestions were received.)

The fifth stage of the project is the present evaluation based on the reactions obtained.

Beyond the experimental project lies a sixth phase of the undertaking, to emend the materials and make them available for instructional use. The University of Washington has requested permission to produce the materials, and hopes to obtain the necessary copyright permissions in time to publish the film and revised commntary during the school year 1964-65.

I. THE VALUE OF THE MATERIALS FOR TEACHING THE LANGUAGE

At all age levels

After a single viewing of the film, both children and adults found that phrases remembered from the poems, even after a single viewing, "haunted" them in the manner of musical tunes that go round and round in one's head. This insistent recall of word groups included the melodic and rhythmic patterns as an integral part of the memory. It tended to include the visual image of facial expression and gestures, which would suggest that the audio and visual model made a more intensive impression than the sound alone. (See the next section for a comparison of film and tape.)

Beyond this value of the film, a sharp distinction emerged between users who simply played it through and those

who worked concentratedly on at least one selection. The one-time viewers showed fatigue after five or even three selections, unless they followed with such ease that they had little to learn in point of language. The workers, at all age levels, found that on repeated viewing the poems became unexpectedly clear and surprisingly easy to imitate and to memorize. A language learner who has internalized a phrase as part of a spoken poem, even if it is somewhat dramatized in the recited model, has advanced toward the readiness to recognize the phrase in conversation, or to recall it for his own use.

The parts of the Commentary that proved useful for teaching the language at all levels are the illustrations, designed to relate new words to their referents instead of to English words; the monolingual definitions of words and phrases; and the commentaries themselves which turn out to provide teachers (and senior-high or college students) with language in which to talk about ideas and art, about facial expressions and the meanings of gestures.

Teaching the language in elementary school

Children enjoyed learning poems from the film, and their retention was better than when they learned from a tape. Mimicking the film is a highly effective method for this age group.

Dr. Georgette Steisel conducted a small experiment with two groups of children and found that four youngsters, their ages ranging from eight to ten, learned Le pélican, La fourmi, and part of Le hareng saur faster and with more continuous pleasure than three other children, ages nine and ten, who listened only to a tape of the sound track of the same poems. The first group's pronunciation was not noticeably better than that of the second group (a fact which may have been due to other external factors), but at a later date, the words and sequence proved to be much better remembered and repro-

duced by the film-viewers than by the tape-listeners.

An experiment following the same procedure with statistically valid groups would seem worth undertaking.

Of the Commentary, the second chapter, "Possible Elements of a Plan for Teaching a Poem" was said to be extremely useful to all elementary-school French teachers. "On my own," one of them exclaimed, "I would never have thought of exploiting all these possibilities!"

In the first chapter, the suggestions for preliminary teaching of vocabulary (the fourth paragraph of page 6) were widely discussed, especially the use of pictures. Most elementary-school teachers wanted more drawings, to accompany all poems usable at that level.

The following suggestions made by experimenters seem worth selecting for mention.

In regard to the issue put to them on page 24 of the Commentary,[3] a majority of teachers chose to combine the alternatives (a) and (b), preferring to see the drawings incorporated in the film itself, rather than on a page or on the blackboard.

This had been done for one selection, as an experiment: in making the film, Mr. Viala drew pictures of the objects that were to figure in Le hareng saur. One teacher notes that these drawings proved highly effective when he projected Le hareng saur to his class "for the pupils' amusement only," (that is, without the help of any comments on his part). "I was gratified that five or sic students could relate the story to me afterwards in English." -- A positive sign of the help that audio-visual clues can bring directly to children who hear and see such actions as: "Il vient, tenant

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3. "One basic issue is the relative value of (a) showing a person reciting, and invoking the viewer's imaginative power to visualize the scenes in the poems, or of (b) showing the scenes, so as to condition to literal "meanings" the viewer's conception of what the phrases refer to, and reducing the recitation to a voice or perhaps a succession of contrasting voices."

dans ses mains..." or "Alors il monte à l'échelle."

One educator who has done much audio-visual language teaching as well as research on FLES programs at Temple University, is persuaded that children need a variety of illustrations. She feels the diversity of the drawings or images that would be called for by objects and themes mentioned in the texts would provide the young minds with the constant novelty and change they enjoy. Considering the use of gestures alone in La fourmi, as compared with the use of drawings for Le hareng saur, she said "children react to the actor as being 'a funny character' ('avec un chapeau sur la tête'), instead of responding to the internal elements of the poem itself."

A variation of the same suggestion was made by another teacher. The actor would first recite the poem, then the sound track would be repeated, accompanied by the visual representation of objects or scenes. Finally, the actor might be shown reciting the poem again.

Dr. Steisel tried this idea in a makeshift attempt to use "props." She had a group of children view the film, then look at cardboard cutouts -- "un jeune capitain," "le pélican capturé," "une île," "un oeuf," "un deuxième pélican," "un autre oeuf," "et encore un autre" -- while she played the corresponding sections of the sound track on tape. The success of this device seemed to depend on the discretion with which such aids were used, the teacher being careful to convey to the pupils the idea that the spoken word was the thing to concentrate upon, the visual clue being only secondary and a reminder. It was also suggested that in the film the actor might point to these successive images as they were projected on the wall behind him, and then come to the front of the stage so that the children's attention would revert to his lips. Then the visual clues that prompt only a literal meaning would serve their purpose without taking the

central place away from the language interest and the meaning of the poem as a whole. A feeling for words and for poetry can be communicated, it seems, by human presence more intimately than by inanimate things.

Some experimenters urged that more poems be filmed. Most of the poems proposed were old favorites, particularly fables of La Fontaine. Others suggested had a surrealist flavor, such as Les hiboux of Robert Desnos, which manages to engage in a poem the seven French words ending in -ou whose plurals end in -oux.

Teaching the language in junior high school

Mr. Rieman, of Jane Addams Junior High School in Seattle, succeeded in teaching La fourmi to approximately 15 of 30 pupils in a seventh-grade class during a single 20 minute period, using the following procedure:

1. The teacher first drew pictures on the blackboard, after the manner of Mr. Viala in Le hareng saur.
2. He pronounced the key words: "une fourmi," "un chapeau," "la tête," "un char," etc.
3. He recited each line, asking the children to repeat after him.
4. "They were then shown the film three times with sound, and once without sound, allowing them to repeat the poem imitating Mr. Viala's lip movements."
5. "Following this, we worked a few minutes on pronunciation and memorization."

A teacher at Wantagh High School, Wantagh, Long Island, New York, who has a BA in Education with emphasis on languages and an MA in French from the University of Pennsylvania, reported that the first reel[4] was effective for emphasizing pronunciation and intonation during the second semester in her first-year French class for 9th graders (aged 12 and 13).

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4. See above, page 3.

She said she would not use the whole film for that class, but added that in her second-year French accelerated class of 9th graders (13 years old), she would have liked to present all of the selections, at the rate of approximately two poems a month. She wanted to devote ten minutes a day to each text for five consecutive days, or the equivalent of one full period a week.

An unexpected adverse criticism of the filming was that junior high school boys could be easily distracted from Mr. Viala's pantomime by his sometimes funny silhouette projected on the wall as in the Promenade de Picasso.

Reflecting on the language-teaching objective of the Commentary, Mrs. Polin felt its most helpful contributions were those pertaining to intonation, accentuation, rythm of the French sentence, etc. Vocabulary and syntax patterns, she recognized, could be taught also by other means, but this way offered "a whole wealth of benefits, all wrapped up into one pleasant package, and the children loved it!"

Recommended were more short poems, easy ones, with repetitions, and on a variety of themes -- in the pattern of the Desnos poems, but presented in the manner of Le hareng saur. Again at this level there was a demand for more drawings as a "fond de tableau" for the performer. The junior-high teachers favored (a) on point 2 of Commentary page 24 (see above, page 8 note 3), but with (b) discreetly used as a secondary visual aid -- an added advantage to capture the youngsters' attention.

In the choice of poems, Mrs. Moskowitz would like to see a greater variety of poetic genres. She explains that at the junior high school level the attention span is still extremely short, especially among boys, who would become bored by the same type of presentation in three poems by Verlaine, or a whole text of Daudet.

Teaching the language in senior high school

All the teachers at this level agreed in reporting that such a film was decidedly helpful in that it induced students to imitate a cultured French voice, and brought about a welcome review of vocabulary, syntax, and speech practice at normal speed.

Two experiments, differently conducted, revealed the favorable reactions of the audience.

The first experiment:

In third and fourth year French classes, the viewing was done without previous study of the poems. This was possible because the students were advanced students of the French language. Nevertheless, the teacher said she was using the film as a device for perfecting all her students' pronunciation by imitation, and in all her advanced classes, as an example of ease and "naturalness" in the art of speaking. "This film is definitely one of the best I have ever seen," she writes. "I am most impressed with the quality of the presentation."

The second experiment:

In the advanced French class (French VIII) at Ballard Senior High School, Seattle, Washington, the eleven girls enrolled are aged 16 and 17. They are all enthusiastic language students and the level of the whole class is above average.

Prior to the showing of the film, the pupils had familiarized themselves with the vocabulary of the texts. First the film was previewed in its entirety; then four selections were shown, and the students "recited with Mr. Viala, both with and without the accompanying sound. They enjoyed and found valuable this type of activity...for the linguistic experience it afforded of pronunciation and intonation drill..." Some of the girls felt Mr. Viala's "gestures were helpful aids in understanding." "There were differences of

opinion among them concerning the value of watching Mr. Viala narrate rather than only hearing him."

The ten-minute reels, said the teacher, would seem to be of desirable length. "A loop of one poem," however, "would be more valuable for special study."

"The manual is beautifully done," wrote Mrs. Louise Collins. She found the drawings particularly helpful, for she preferred, before showing the film, to use extensively such language teaching devices as pictures of objects and words explained in French, incorporating these in her regular study periods. "I can envision what a tremendous impact this film would make after the poems have first been studied in class."

Following the suggestions outlined in Chapter II of the Commentary, Mr. Polin put a great emphasis on point 1 (learning the new expressions), observing that his students "got bored and resentful when they had to listen to something they did not understand." "Naturally," he said, "the length of time spent on 1 varies according to the level of the class."

Few recommendations were made at this level apart from those reported for the junior high school.

Judging the present choice of poems suitable for that age group, with the primary idea of acquainting the students with a language, the French and Russian teacher at Smithtown Central High School said that such a series of recited poems would "certainly fill its linguistic purposes" if one would include "a greater number of simple poems, to be used at all levels of instruction." He observed that in his second and third year French classes at the 11th-grade level, his young male audience, mostly 16-year-olds, and the rest 15, also respond to another literary genre, the drama, so he was strongly in favor of including simple, short excerpts of plays.

Teaching the language in college

One reaction which came explicitly only from the college

level was that Mr. Viala's easy, graceful manner of introducing and of reciting the selections made students feel they too could speak in French. He had the effect of giving them confidence as they began the discussion of a poem. This encouraging experience appeared to have its effect at the lower age levels as well.

With the thought of using the materials in a first-year college French course Mother Maria Consolata, a Bryn Mawr Ph. D. and Chairman of the Foreign-Language Department at Rosemont College, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, made a study of the film and Commentary. She came to the following conclusions, which are corroborated (if less systematically) by the other reports received.

She decided to use the first reel with new students, at any early stage, without previous reading of the poems, in teaching the pronunciation of vowels. Le hareng saur, for example, repeats and contrasts the sounds [y], [i], and [u]: "nu, nu, nu," "petits, petits, petits," "toujours, toujours, toujours." Poems as difficult as that of La Fontaine she would not use until the second or third semester, when she proposes that students may best study the written page before seeing the film. Other teachers preferred always to present the spoken form before the written, and the filmed recitation is ideally adapted to make this possible.

For the second semester, she found the first and second reels useful to illustrate grammatical points, such as the position of adjectives (page 49, line 5: "un marteau lourd," "un grand clou"), after the points had been studied in class. The students are captivated to see how natural this syntax seems when a Frenchman uses it. (The film may catalyze the transition to methods in which the students never find the syntax unnatural, since they are accustomed to the patterns in action before they come to analyze them.)

Mother Consolata and several other teachers recommended that more than one actor and preferably actresses as well,

would be desirable for teaching the language. Her reason for proposing women's voices was that the feminine intonation is different. This reason is in fact to be added to the usual concerns that students should be exposed to a variety of voices, and that students like such variety.

In a second-semester college French class, thirteen boys and girls wrote lengthy reports on the first eight poems of the film. These students had not had access to the Commentary. Seven found the gestures and facial expressions "beneficial,: i.e., helpful toward understanding the language and the mood. Amplifying this principal comment, these second-semester students showed that they also enjoyed the medium of film: "It was a lot more alive" [than tape]. "It places the learner in the actual situation of French usage." "More normal situation." "More natural." Two reacted adversely to the style of acting. They believed that Mr. Viala was "overdoing it." "Silly motions," wrote one boy. Concerning the pace of the spoken models, one felt "the orator recited too quickly...but the film would be profitable if repeated several times." This reaction to the normal (but deliberate) pace of Mr. Viala's careful diction indicates learners who had not yet been exposed sufficiently to French spoken at normal speed. It is one of the virtues of recitations that the rhythm integral to the literary work of art impels both the model and the learner to avoid unnaturally slow speech, which today is agreed to be pedagogically bad because it abets the bad habit of attending to individual words instead of to sense groups.

Typical of the reactions obtained at the second-year level are these spontaneous comments made by students who watched the first half of the film during their third semester of French. An A student: "These films are an excellent opportunity for us to hear various French accents" [i.e., an additional person's accent]. Another A student: "Many of the speaker's gestures were helpful in understanding

the meaning of some words." A student averaging B work: "I found it very helpful when he went slowly and acted the scenes out." A second student averaging B: "It began well with an explanation of the new words but it skipped over the explanations in the other poems." A less proficient student: "It helped to have some unfamiliar material, however, because, since I was convinced I could not understand the words, I listened to intonation and pitch of the speaking voice. Hearing another speaker is most valuable.

One student, average grade B-, tried to analyse why films of this kind are better than tapes. "I wish we could have more of this practice, as I do not think that even the tapes can teach us to understand spoken French." The tapes "are still artificial with their directions and lengthy pauses that give us too much time to think in English and then translate into French....In class or in the lab we are never made to listen to any lengthy discourse and view the speaker at the same time. When the two are suddenly combined, it is difficult to adjust to this new live situation. The lab trains our ear but does not apply it to a normal situation, which I feel is my primary purpose in taking French -- being able to apply it practically."

Criticism of the film again was favorable with mild reservations concerning the style of acting. "The man was quite dramatic, even to the point of overdoing it a little," wrote one student, this time a girl.

The constructive suggestions called for more such films. Two good students suggested other genres besides poetry: a story and a play with several actors.

The same generally favorable reception of the film was encountered among second-year students from a predominantly agricultural region, who tend to be very typically American in regarding poetry, at least literary poetry, as a phenomenon extrinsic to their everyday life and thought. At the

State College of Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa, 16 students in their fourth semester of college French reported to Professor Henri Chabert their impressions on the entire film. Here the procedure was to show the film in a room where lights were kept on so students could read the written texts as necessary. The students also had vocabulary lists, which were handed out just before the film began. No other previous preparation was given. "Of the 16 students, 12 found this type of presentation enjoyable and informative." Eleven thought the presence of the man on film helped their comprehension. "Thirteen would rather see Le sous-préfet recited on rilm than just hear it on a record." One girl was annoyed by exaggerated gestures, while another one said "they were often an added aid."

Dr. Steisel found that the gestures helped some of her rather poor college students a great deal, in reviewing their elusive knowledge of the language, to retain the meaning of words which they otherwise tend to forget almost immediately. The difference, she believes, is to be accounted for by the association of auditory, visual, and kinetic stimuli. She asked these students to identify themselves with the speaker, to act out his gestures while saying the words: "avec un chapeau sur la tête," "un oeuf tout blanc," and in each line of Le hareng saur.

Beyond the second college year of the language, the film and Commentary continue to be useful for teaching French intonation and rhythm, and new expressions. The findings added by the experimentation at the upper levels, however, fall largely under the heading of arousing an interest in literature, to which we now turn.

II. THE VALUE OF THE MATERIALS FOR DEVELOPING AN INTEREST IN LITERATURE

At all age levels

The zest of the actor for the amusing selections proved contagious among children and adults alike. As Miss Abby Adams generalizes after showing the film at South Eugene High School, Oregon, "Almost all students of every level thoroughly enjoyed the children's poems."

The actor's deep feeling for the serious poems communicated itself generally to students from the senior-high level upward, and to a few mature-minded children.

The children's selections serve as a bridge to the more difficult ones: high-school and college students, after viewing the first two reels, approached the later reels with an expectation of enjoyment. Since children also enjoyed the first poems in the collection it is reasonable to infer that they, too, were developing an expectation that would strengthen their interest in poetry at a later time.

All the selections had the power to arouse interest and give esthetic pleasure -- except when students who did not understand the language were subjected to an excessively long session. Miss Abby Adams notes that "Totally unfamiliar material brought such remarks as: 'I could understand a part by watching his expression.' 'I didn't know what he said, but I loved the sound of the language.' '...so much better than listening to tapes...'"

Repeated exposure to each poem until it is familiar led to a richer appreciation than a first viewing. Miss Adams reports that "Students most enjoyed the poems which they had already memorized." None of the diverse ways teachers invented for practicing the selections appears to have spoiled the fresh enthusiasm evidenced by students at all the age levels.

Interest in literature at the elementary-school level

The younger set who listened to the first reel of the film enjoyed the rhymes in Le pélican. A few discovered, "before the teacher did" -- or so they thought! -- the constant repetition of the sound [ã] "like a musical note." In Le hareng saur, Dr. Steisel led an experimental class of children to recognize that the actor's movements parallel the rhythm of his speech. Many comments poured out: "So that's why he says all those words three times." "And he does do it through the whole thing, with his hands, at the same time that he speaks...." "Yes, un-deux-trois, like 'swinging.'" "his head, all of him!" The realization of a rhythmic pattern was the beginning of an esthetic enjoyment for these children.

In playing excerpts from the sound track on tape, Dr. Steisel suggested that the young ones close their eyes for an instant and visualize "in their minds" the man whom they had previously seen on film, in order to recapture the poetic feeling of the poems.

The experimentation leaves no doubt that the actor's audio-visual presence has a more powerful effect than a printed or an auditory model, of eliciting and shaping by suggestion the esthetic responsiveness of the viewer, even the pre-adolescent viewer. The issue whether the visual element should be a person reciting or the objects mentioned in the text consequently receives a different answer, on an esthetic basis, from the answer given in the section on language teaching, where it was reported that teachers wanted both visual elements (page 8). Artistically, the mediating artist becomes far the more important.

The new media can in fact enrich education by helping both with the literal perception of the world of sense data, and also with the cultivation of the peculiarly human capacity to conceive an imaginary situation as presented by a

person through language, provided the learner knows the language as well, let us say, as a child has to know English in order to enjoy a nursery rhyme and through the experience to begin developing sensitivity to the long poetic tradition of English used non-literally. The great importance of striving to nurture poetic sensitivity arises from the apparent fact that modern Western culture and education are too dominantly fact oriented, even for the good of science. Perhaps it is up to teachers in the humanities to make the child at home in areas of experience that have not been reduced to literal statement, partly because the scientist who will advance beyond present science must deal, precisely, with such areas of experience.

Interest in literature at the junior high-school level

In Jane Addams Junior High School, Seattle, "the children were greatly pleased by Mr. Viala's movements and exaggerations" because he tried to say something in a different way. In the summary of his report, Mr. John Rieman indicates as the primary benefit of such a film, that Mr. Viala can convey the feelings in a poem better than would some "ordinary" teacher, who would "find it difficult to emote when reciting poetry." "This film is excellent." One educator felt, on the contrary, that "most teachers could possibly teach a poem as well as Mr. Viala." The opposing views may be reconciled by recognizing that while the film is a powerful teaching aid, the teacher's work of presenting it to the pupils and making use of it for the children's pleasure is also essential. Mr. Rieman's procedure for using the film is described above on page 10.

The question of the best kinds of poem for the junior-high level led to differing opinions among the sixteen teachers of French in the University of Washington course on "The Teaching of Foreign Literature" (a jointly offered

Romance Department and College of Education 475J) taught by Mrs. Frances Creore. Some thought the three poems of Verlaine were too sad for this age level. Others thought the beauty of the poems -- their language, imagery, rhythm and rhyme -- dominated and transformed the sad mood and despairing expression of Mr. Viala. All agreed that success in using these poems would depend on the type of class, and on how much French the class could understand. Any bright class of ninth graders in their third year of French (having begun in the seventh grade) should be able to learn these poems with enjoyment. The difference of opinion is of course partly a matter of tastes and of styles in which teachers fortunately are not alike.

All of these teachers believed that to have students learn poems by heart is a good way to teach the language as well as the literature. Most of the class thought that simpler, more familiar fables of La Fontaine could be used more successfully in second and third-year language classes than the one recited, Le singe et le léopard.

Interest in literature at the senior high-school level

One teacher who agreed strongly with the literary objective as proposed on page 23 of the Commentary, said that this film would be "the greatest asset in making her pupils sense what poetry has to offer that differs from other genres of literature, prose, plays of plain dialogues." She would emphasize this aim above the two others (language and culture). As procedure she gives the foremost place to point 5 of Chapter II, leaving out point 6 entirely and reserving point 8 for the very end.[5] Accordingly, she recommends pro-

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5. Cultural Commentary, "Possible Elements of a Plan for Teaching a Poem," p. 8:
"5. Ask students to look for the feeling, mood or tone of the poem.
"6. Have students look for any moral or lesson which the poet wishes to leave with the reader.
"8. Ask students what they like particularly (or dislike)."

jecting the film even to very beginners, just a little of it at a time, asking them at first only to respond to the poetic feeling. "As simple a poem as Chanson de la Seine would be perfect for bringing third- and fourth-year high-school students to understand that the Viala interpretation of the Prévert text is bringing them much more than the literal meanings of the plain words they use in class everyday."

"My students were most impressed," wrote Mrs. Louise Collins of Franklin High School, Seattle, "and many made the comment that they would so enjoy having this film as part of our classroom study....An appreciation of poetry would be readily gained with such a fine teaching aid."

An eleventh-grade teacher, on the other hand, preferred to use the first two reels with a simplified "explication de texte" taken from the Commentary, even though he had some exceptional students, writing their own poetry and attempting to translate some of it into French -- mature male students who would naturally enjoy Ronsard, Verlaine and Baudelaire in English translation. The "plain" poems, in his opinion, were better pedagogically.

In a more artistically oriented situation where interest in poetry nonetheless "ranged from avid to practically none," a group of advanced French students in their last year of high school, acquainted themselves with the literary significance of the selected texts and authors, and discussed at length the choice of poems. Being adolescents and thinking themselves sophisticated, "the girls found the Desnos and Cros poems 'infantile,' but they condescended to be amused by such texts. Some thought he over-dramatized humorous poetry....Some said that images representative of the content or underlying meaning of the poem would have been preferable; and they expressed disappointment that the presentation had not followed the general pattern of imagery of a film." (That is, they would have preferred a visual

sequence that paralleled the imagery of a poem, perhaps after the manner of the motion picture, "Fantasia." This treatment would introduce into the work of art, however, a new connotative import that might better be kept separate from it, as one of a plurality of possible commentaries.

These students recognized the value of watching Mr. Viala's interpretation, however, first with and then without sound, "for the possibilities it provided to approximate his interpretation." Thus they liked him as a guide, who helped them penetrate into the meaning of a poem. They especially enjoyed Un fruit pendu... by Raymond Grenier, and showed considerable interest in the ideas suggested by Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau and the Promenade de Picasso of Prévert, even though they had not had enough time to prepare the texts well. It is interesting to note that the two selections they enjoyed most of all were two poems they had memorized during the semester, out of the Choix de Poésies, edited by Louise Bégué with an accompanying record spoken by Mr. Viala.

Interest in literature at the college level

The range of response to the literary appeal of the film was essentially the same at the senior high-school and college levels. Almost all the college students were attracted by the children's poems, and found the serious poems more intensely meaningful on film than on tape or in print.

A few individuals who used poems of the collection for self-instruction were all enthusiastic that the experience was artistically enjoyable as well as a rewarding approach to the language. They wanted more materials of the same kind.

Opinions differed, as at the high-school level, on the taste of the interpretation and of the choice of texts, a minority wishing for a more restrained style and more joyful

tone.

For some, the gestures distracted from the poetic feeling of the spoken lines, when "exaggerated," for others it enhanced it.

Adolescent girls asked for more "sad poems," nostalgic ones like "Je fais souvent ce rêve étrange et pénétrant," while an older woman said she "would omit Verlaine as being too funèbre." Individual preferences dictated choices which ranged from Villon to Paul Fort and Jules Laforgue.

Some of the teachers in Mrs. Creore's course on "The Teaching of Foreign Literature"expressed reactions of their own to the materials, and may be taken as an example of adult students of French. Of these, two were very enthusiastic, one was enthusiastic, and four were "favorable." Three more (making a total of ten) liked the materials but made suggestions for improving them. One would have preferred pictures as the visual sequence. Only one disliked what he considered "les gestes bizarres et l'intonation littéraire."

A list has been made of the selections proposed during this experimentation and also in a preliminary inquiry among NDEA Institute participants in the summer of 1963. The proposals can be improved upon, however, by the approach that will be recommended in the last section of this report.

III. THE VALUE OF THE MATERIALS FOR GIVING INSIGHT INTO THE CULTURE

It was more difficult for teachers to serve this objective than the two already discussed: to give insight into the culture required much more ad hoc preparation, if not a background of study, and the experimenters did not have time for either in the present project. The material in this section is too scant to permit generalizing separately for each age level. The paucity of the reports probably means,

above all else, that the cultural context of language teaching needs attention, and hence was rightly brought into this project.

Most of the teachers recognized that the film was an innovation in this respect, with rich instructional possibilities.

"It is rare," wrote Mr. Rieman, "to be able to see the speaker himself, using the lip movements and body gestures so typical of the culture."

"The cultural commentary is outstanding," wrote another teacher. "The cultural implications -- the moods and impressions created -- the sensitive reactions -- the meaning of gesture -- all these facets enter into the presentation." "What a joy it would be to have a study unit [taken from] this manual and film! This is one area of teaching in which many of us do need help, and the manual and film suggest the answer."

While this last appraisal somewhat overreaches the evidence, it seems sound in principle to approach through their literature a culture and society where literature is prized and is constantly in the background of human relations. Learning poetry and quoting poems in conversation are a more prominent part of French culture than of American. To overlearn spoken poems thus becomes a way of internalizing this feature of the culture, as well as a way of growing accustomed to the forms of expressiveness, and the attitudes, inherent in the language and paralanguage as used by French people.

The present film can be claimed to be a good reflection of French culture, with the reservation that according to some tastes, some passages are over-acted. A few French viewers, from professors to an exchange high-school student, have feared that the children's poems might be taken as a caricature of their countrymen, but the fears do not seem

justified by the American reactions.

A reading of the commentaries on the selections shows that some significant characteristics of French life are well illustrated in the poems, despite the fact that they were not selected on this ground. (See above, page 2.) Some of the teachers in Mrs. Creore's class commented, in fact, that this collection added considerably to the readings they were currently using, in point of their representation of aspects of French culture, and some were eager to look for more writings of the authors to whom the materials had introduced them.

One constructive suggestion made was that seminars for teachers would be helpful, to show them the cultural wealth they can share with their students by using such materials as this filmed recital and its commentary.

Also suggested was formal research conducted in the schools, under supervision of qualified experimenters, to determine more extensively the possibilities of such material especially for teaching aspects of a foreign culture.

For example, Mrs. Steisel used the material of the Commentary and the film successfully in the reverse order of the usual procedure from literature in itself to the cultural and social context around it. In a college "Composition and Conversation" course at the second- and third-year levels, and also in an advanced "Culture and Civilization" class students first read texts defining French culture and French society, and a few cultural aspects exemplified by some of the poems, as pointed out in the Commentary, were stressed while discussing the readings. Then the students were shown the film, and were able to point out spontaneously how vividly the literary French text, interpreted by a Frenchman, proved to illustrate the points theoretically discussed in the readings and lectures. "It proves it! said one student. "Literature can be alive" was another comment. "You get it from the author's words as well as from the actor's demeanor,

its perfect!"

"Cela les enrichit beaucoup" asserted Mother Consolata of her students. She explained that a hurried preview of the film had failed at first to convince her that it was better than tapes for teaching purposes, but her reading of the Commentary persuaded her, she says, that "this had much, much more to offer than the tapes." She has conceived the idea of a contest for her students who, after thorough study of a poem on film and with the extra help of tapes such as the spoken explication offered on page 35 of the Commentary, would perform "à la manière de Viala," and be judged on three aspects of their performances: their command of the language, their poetic interpretation of the passage, and -- a rarer thing -- the way they can sense and convey a feeling for some significant features of French culture embodied in the passage. The triple task is difficult, she admits, but the students would work at it, profit by it and enjoy it.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The film with its accompanying Commentary is highly effective at all age levels, from the elementary grades up, for teaching the language, as indicated on pages 6-7; and for developing sensitivity to literature and the expectation of enjoying poetry, as summarized on page 18. The materials also appear to be of value, if rightly used, for giving insight into the aspects of French culture and society that are shown in the Commentary to be illustrated in the selections.

The experimenters repeatedly found that literary works presented on film made a more vivid impression, and were better retained, than when an auditory model alone was used.

The materials exerted a good influence in several ways. Notably, they stimulated teachers to take a fresh, experi-

mental view of their methods and materials. This effect was conspicuous among teachers of the older generation which had learned to present the written word first in teaching a foreign language and literature. A second influence observable was that the normal pace of the actor's speech conflicted with any tendency to accustom students to an unnaturally slow pace; the rhythm of the literary selections led the learner, as well as the model, to keep a proper pace.

A third effect was to interest teachers at the lower age levels in using good literary selections as teaching materials, and in reading good literature for the purpose of finding materials. A fourth was to draw attention to the need for a more reasoned effort to give insight into the social and cultural context of a foreign language and literature.

Repeated contact with a poem led to a better result than a single viewing of many selections -- both in point of esthetic enjoyment. The most effective of all ways to use the materials would surely be to introduce them gradually, throughout a school year, so that each selection taught can be "overlearned, assimilated, and its social and cultural relations explored and examined reflectively. The present project could not have permitted a year-long experiment without delaying for a year the availability of its materials and conclusions, yet the inference is probably as useful as a proof would be, that gradual assimilation is the most effective use possible.

To make repeated viewing of a film easier than at present, 8 mm. projectors and film cartridges should be perfected as rapidly as can be done.

For every age level, additional brief, whole works of literature should be selected and filmed. They should be selected according to all of three criteria:

1. proper vocabulary and syntax for an intended level of instruction;
2. literary worth, variety of types, and appropriateness to an age level;
3. enbodiment of significant features of the foreign culture or social structure, under such categories as are enumerated in Chapter III of the Commentary.

Men's and women's voices should both be used, without allowing variety to break up the unity of the works of art.

Experimental research in this emerging field should concentrate upon:

1. discovering what most needs to be taught about a given sociocultural system to a given group of learners;
2. refining methods of using film at each age level for pursuing together the three purposes to which the body of this report is devoted;
3. perfecting the teaching materials required by the evolving method;
4. developing curricular sequences, coordinating foreign-language teaching with related subjects, such that the learner will be able to achieve the capacity to communicate successfully in a second language, the capacity to enjoy literature, and a coherent understanding of his own culture and a second culture.